

Funding for Grand Isle Shoreline Restoration and Marsh Restoration near Myrtle Grove
June 30, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. -United States Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La. and Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awarded \$7 million to two projects that will create intertidal marsh habitat and oyster reefs to support important recreational and commercial fisheries and also to help reduce flooding. NOAA estimates that this American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding will support 35 jobs. *Funding for Grand Isle Shoreline Restoration and Marsh Restoration near Myrtle Grove*
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"Securing federal funding for critical coastal restoration projects is one of my highest priorities in this Congress," Sen. Landrieu said. "Federal, state and local governments must work together to channel resources to the most essential projects. Both restoring Mississippi River tidal marshland and Grand Isle's shoreline fit that description. Louisiana needs grants like these to curb flooding and reduce storm surge, but also to protect one of our state's most important industries - fishing. These funds ensure progress toward making our communities safe, while supporting good-paying jobs and guarding our state's key economic interests."

"Grand Isle has suffered enormous land loss in recent years as its vulnerable shoreline has been pummeled again and again by major hurricanes," said Rep. Melancon. "This funding will help Grand Isle strengthen its natural defenses, providing better hurricane protection for the community and its residents, while also preserving a critical barrier island that buffers inland parishes from the full force of hurricanes."

Rep. Melancon continued, **"Additionally, I am pleased that this federal funding will be used to rebuild Louisiana's marshes with dredged sediment from the Mississippi River. We in Louisiana have long argued that dredge material should be put to good use in restoring our coastal wetlands, instead of being dumped in the Gulf, and this funding will support just that kind of commonsense project."**

The Nature Conservancy's Grand Isle shoreline restoration project received a grant for \$4,028,397. This effort's goal is to build approximately four miles of shoreline protection (oyster reefs) along two vulnerable coastlines in Louisiana, Biloxi Marsh and Grand Isle.

Louisiana currently experiences the highest rate of coastal land loss in the country, in large part due to the erosive force of wave action on fragile coastlines. Shell reefs, which were once

ubiquitous across the Louisiana coast and protected shorelines, have declined in abundance and health. This project seeks to reverse that trend in two key places and refurbish ecological capital in these highly productive systems.

Dr. Keith Ouchley, State Director of the Nature Conservancy said **"We are very excited about this project that will demonstrate that natural structures can provide both ecosystem services and shoreline protection on the Louisiana coast. These projects will also provide an important opportunity to test technology that can be used across the Gulf and will provide employment opportunities for Louisiana businesses and residents."**

HHS awarded the other grant of \$3,025,000 to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources for Mississippi River tidal marsh restoration. The funds will allow dredging of sediment from the Mississippi River to create 50 acres of intertidal marsh to support recreationally and commercially important fisheries as well as helping to reduce storm surge and flooding. The marsh will be created near Bayou Dupont, north of Myrtle Grove.

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